

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6107

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COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK

S E C R E T BANGKOK 26892

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PFOR, TH, US

SUBJECT: U.S. RESIDUAL PRESENCE IN THAILAND

1. CHARGE, ACCOMPANIED BY POMIL COUNSELOR, CALLED AT MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DECEMBER 29 AT REQUEST FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI. CHATCHAI WAS DELAYED BY UNEXPECTED BUSINESS AND THEY WERE RECEIVED INITIALLY BY DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS KOSON SINTHAWANON. THIS TELEGRAM REPORTS KOSON'S COMMENTS ON MATTERS CONCERNING U.S. RESIDUAL PRESENCE. SEPTELS REPORT ON OTHER SUBJECTS RAISED BY KOSON, CHATCHAI AND CHARGE.

2. KOSON INFORMED US THAT AS RESULT OF DECEMBER 25 MEETING BETWEEN CHATCHAI AND THAI MILITARY, THAI HAD CONCLUDED THAT NEXT STEP TOWARD RESIDUAL CONFIGURATION OF RAMASUN, KO KHA AND DET 415 CHIANG MAI SHOULD BE DIPLOMATIC NOTE FROM EMBASSY TO MINISTRY OFFERING TURNOVER OF THESE INSTALLATIONS TO RTG. THIS TURNOVER, WITH APPROPRIATE CEREMONIES, WOULD HAVE TO BE ACCOMPLISHED BEFORE MARCH 20 FOR QUOTE POLITICAL UNQUOTE REASONS.

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23. ONCE NOTE HAD BEEN RECEIVED, THAI SIDE WOULD DRAFT PROPOSED U.S./THAI AGREEMENTS GOVERNING FUTURE USE OF THREE INSTALLATIONS. CITING UDORN BARTENDERS' CASE (BANGKOK 19518), KOSON SAID THAT NEW AGREEMENTS WOULD HAVE TO ESTABLISH THAI AUTHORITY OVER FACILITIES COMPARABLE TO UDORN AIR BASE N.C.O. CLUB.

4. KOSON SAID IT WAS UNCERTAIN AS OF NOW WHETHER THAI WOULD WISH TO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN OPERATIONS AT KO KHA AND DET 415, AS THEY WOULD BE AT RAMASUN. HE SAID THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE STUDIED. IN MEANTIME, FORMAL TURNOVER AND NAMING OF THAI BASE COMMANDER SHOULD OCCUR.

5. WE POINTED OUT TO KOSON THAT UNDER EXISTING RAMASUN AND KO KHA AGREEMENTS, STATUS OF PERSONNEL HAD BEEN COVERED UNDER 1950 MILITARY ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT. U.S. MILITARY THERE HAD THUS ENJOYED SAME PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES AS JUSMAG. CHARGE SAID BEST COURSE WOULD BE TO CONTINUE THIS ARRANGEMENT SO ALL U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL HAD SAME STATUS. ALTHOUGH HE WAS SOMEWHAT VAGUE IN RESPONSE, KOSON SEEMED TO IMPLY THAT 1950 MILITARY ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT MIGHT CONTINUE TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE COVERAGE.

6. KOSON EXPRESSED OPINION THAT IF DIPLOMATIC NOTE COULD BE PROMPTLY DELIVERED, WORKING LEVEL TALKS ON FUTURE OF RAMASUN MIGHT BE STARTED AS EARLY AS SECOND WEEK IN JANUARY. HE IMPLIED THAT DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, SUPREME COMMAND HEADQUARTERS, GENERAL SAIYUT KOETPHON, WOULD BE CHAIRMAN ON THAI SIDE, WITH MFA REPRESENTED. WE AGREED TO SEEK WASHINGTON'S AUTHORITY TO DELIVER NOTE AS REQUESTED BY KOSON.

7. WE POINTED OUT THAT PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF PERSONNEL COULD PROBABLY BE DEALT WITH ACROSS THE BOARD IN ONE AGREEMENT APPLICABLE TO ALL REMAINING U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN THAILAND, WHEREAS OPERATIONS
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AT SPECIFIC INSTALLATIONS COULD NOT. IT WAS AGREED THAT BEST COURSE MIGHT BE A STATUS-OF-FORCES TYPE AGREEMENT (THIS TERM WAS NOT ACTUALLY USED DURING THE DISCUSSION) BASED ON 1950 AGREEMENT TO COVER PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF PERSONNEL, WITH SEPARATE AGREEMENTS, POSSIBLY ATTACHED THERETO AS ANNEXES, FOR OPERATIONS AT INDIVIDUAL INSTALLATIONS. IT IS OBVIOUS FROM THIS DISCUSSION THAT RTG WILL WANT STATUS

OF U.S. PERSONNEL AND OPERATION OF REMAINING FACILITIES
CLEARLY SPELLED OUT.

8. UPON CONCLUSION OF THIS PORTION OF DISCUSSION,
KOSON IMMEDIATELY LAUNCHED INTO QUESTION OF DESIRE
OF THAILAND FOR F5E AIRCRAFT (SEPTTEL, IMPLYING QUID
PRO QUO RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THIS AND THE U.S. RESIDUAL
PRESENCE.

9. EMBASSY WILL SUBMIT DRAFT NOTE FOR WASHINGTON'S
APPROVAL ON TURNOVER OF RAMASUN, KO KHA AND DET 415
TO RTG. EMBASSY WILL ALSO SUBMIT ANALYSIS AND RECOMMEN-
DATIONS ON STATUS OF FORCES QUESTION.
MASTERS

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NNN

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